Education Transformation Policy Commission
Minutes for Meeting on March 9, 2009

Present
Commission Members: Chris Koliba; Teri Geney, Bill Rivard, Kyle Weinreich, Don Collins, Retta Dunlap, Martha Tucker; Brigid Scheffert; Laura Soares, Tom James, Mike Deweese; Karrin Wilks

DOE Staff: Kay Charron, Bill Romond, Carol King

Guests: Amy Cole, Karen White

Commission members unable to attend: Brian Howe; Chris Robbins, Michelle Forman, Lisa Ventriss, Johannah Donovan

Meeting Notes

Commissioner Welcome
On behalf of Commissioner Vilaseca, Bill Romond welcomed policy commission members noting that this is the "flagship effort for transformation"; continuing the ongoing work to move to an education system that considers student and their learning needs first

SBE chair Tom James thanked the members for their time and commitment to this effort. He asked all to consider how long this conversation has been ongoing? Multiple years - HSOM first; defining by the Board started in 8/07; Basically the conversation needs to be about what needs to happen to improve results even more, to make education student centered with flexible learning environments so that opportunities and incentives are provided for all students, i.e., the 15% that are not graduating from high school.

Romond provided background context as to the constitution of the group, as a follow-up to a review of current rules and regulations by department staff members and the State Board. That review indicated that the current pieces in place needed more than a tweaking but rather a review that could bring about systemic change. The goal of the commission's work will be to make recommendations to the Board to in the fall so that the Board and department can use these recommendations to set the legislation agenda for January 2010. The policy commissioner conversations with have breadth, depth and diversity. Members were asked to approach conversation with an open mind and understanding.

Understanding our charge
Kay reviewed the Power Point presentation and noted the readings in the notebook provided to form a common basis/understanding for all members, as well as understanding the charge, developing some norms for working together and beginning discussions on policy characteristics. Comments included

> System is overregulated
> What kind of policy would be in place if we had what we wanted and could bring about the changes needed?
> What's the policy that can drive a vision?

Create policies not to regulate but to help schools build their own capacity and not drive or mandate

The goal is to bring recommendations to the Board on critical policy areas and identify specific language – should it be through leg process or through administrative rules

Policy Framework – should lay out goals, why, identify key parameters (handout); it is more than a discreet list on this,,,,this,,,,,this,,,,,this -- but looks at the concept, not the content.

High Leverage Policy:
> Something that can produce the change, has a rippling effect and can move things forward in all areas (i.e., has an influence in the direction where you want to go.
>
> Impacts behavior in the desired direction and has potential to produce changes in the direction you want to go.

PreK – 12 or 16? The question was asked as to the sphere of influence- whether it is to 12 or 16. The general consensus of those present was that the discussion should be centered PreK-16 and should not be limited by the fact the SBE has jurisdiction only to 12, and that the CTE system should be seamless, allowing students to blend effortlessly between general education and CTE (ultimately, one system). Dual enrollments is necessary to the discussion

*Strategy may be policies that improve outcomes, across the spectrum, and focused on the secondary school graduate.

Introductions:
Policy Commission members introduced themselves, telling a little about themselves, their background and each suggesting two areas where they felt change could happen:
- Equity
- 21 C learning standards – need to teach the most critical skills
- system is self perpetuating because it serve us well, but need to look at why it doesn't
- re-think what we mean by intelligence
- child centered – erase the boundaries so that kids can go to school that meets their needs – may not be in the home district
- learning outside the classroom to make students successful
- systemic reform – removing the deterrents to system change
- PreK -7 experience is critical
- policy
- funding flow
- changing role of the teacher (teacher quality and effectiveness – define what teachers can do for
- Model for achieving in schools (9 months; 5 days per wee)
- move away from old thinking of educational opportunity
- Stuck in inputs; need to shift to outcomes (New metrics for outcomes)
- every child needs an individual learning plan
- engaging opportunities for all students
- (local) accountability strengthened

- stronger K-16 partnerships
- blurring the line between high school and college (dual enrollment)
- Personalization & performance based assessments
- Technology as a learning tool as a way to change education delivery
- strong personal relationships with kids -
- Individual learning pathways for students
- Systems constraints – what's preventing a policy from moving forward
- redefine what it means to be a successful student – what have they learned? Mastery
- policy that can be implemented, not wasted and ineffective
- Individual learning Plans (ILP) –
- 21 C skill – character development; business practice;
- funding – working smartly within constrained budgets
- school long term planning within severe economics
- work with schools to improve internal dynamics (teacher, burnout, etc)
- teacher leader rejuvenation
- 21st c standards- change curriculum from discipline specific to interdisciplinary
- current models

Kay – transformation is not an add-on; getting that point across is critical

- 3 sentence vision statement – who what why – in 3 sentences
- project based inquiry/learning
- system that is either expected or required to adapt to the needs of students rather than the opposite;
- promote needs of ALL kids

In addition, the group discussed
Perspectives on 21 C educations
 Clarity on the vision and how that drives policy

What student outcomes and school practices do we want our policies to effect?
 New metrics
 Define what it means to be successful

- SBE work in 07-08
- Primer
- Core Elements
  Mastery – critical, and the goal
  Providing learning opportunities for all students

Policy Discussion:
 Level of policy…..at what level do you want to draft policy

 Policy: - is it regulatory or is it programmatic?
 Balance need for clear articulation without being prescriptive
 Some may be more prescriptive
  Affordable
  Sustainable

Implementable
- include a frame for the implementation of the process – 6-8 year

DOE:
- Left hand and right hand of the dept not communicating; not thinking about the implementation; discussions need to be rooted in how and can it be done – lasting change.
- Structural challenge; structure of DOE has been problematic; how to effect change; put out the ideas, but the devil is in the implementation;

Bill – Schools try to take on too many things; *stick with something for 5-6 years to give it a chance to work

Kay – important part is the interdependent nature of the transformation; schools are overwhelmed

Kyle – schools should not be wasting students' time; it is a lost commodity

The Policy Cycle
Characteristics of effective policy – brainstorming session:
- Affordability
- End results
- Flexibility – policy doesn't drive implementation
- Policy level (not procedures)
- Policy definition
- Expresses value
- Flexible
- Context for goals
- Creates framework
- Key practices (areas to keep at forefront)
- Safe learning environment
- Never changes; enduring
- Accountable
- "Ends" in place (means and ends)
- Structure of the system, of the DOE (needs to be addressed)
- Shaped
- Value Driven; value/goal alignment
- Structured to move forward
- Capacity is addressed
- Community support – drives change
- Accountability: what; from where; to whom
- Communication/public relations (effective, implementable, sustainable)
- To the public so it knows what is being discussed and going on
- To the legislature so there are not surprises in January

Capacity:
Best system that can be described rather than what it looks like

Implementation:
>   How it is realized (evaluation)

Timeline – needs to be developed for the Commission

Commission Operations:

1. Next 3 meetings are 3/23, 4/13, and 4/27. They will run 9:30-12:30 and will be held at the RT 302 DOE offices

2. Meetings will be scheduled on the 2nd and 4th Monday of the month

3. If unable to attend, notify Kay Charron, Bill Romond or Carol King

4. Homework for next meeting:
   - review the additional articles in notebooks
   - look through the Darling Hammond book. (Suggested: Chapters 4, 7, 10) Notations may be helpful: interesting ideas you want to highlight; concerns you disagree with; etc.
   - identify the 3-5 readings that you found most meaningful, as we might take some meeting time to discuss some of the readings in depth.

5. Consider making journal notes on thoughts as the commission's work progresses; notes on ideas about the VT vision for education transformation; ideas about desired student outcomes; ideas desired school practices with highest leverage for attaining the outcomes; and ideas on potentially high leverage policies. The Commission will be collecting many thoughts and ideas and a journal might be helpful.

6. Review the sample "VT policy framework" distributed at the meeting, as well as the Rhode Island example. Looking at these in more detail will help build an understanding of what the policy framework should accomplish for our work. It is important that we work for real policy coherence that links goals/outcomes to individual policies. Otherwise, we will generate a list of policies but how they work interdependently to change the system will be lost.

   ## DOE
7. DOE staff will clarify the question on whether your meetings are officially "public meetings" and get it out to you electronically.

8. DOE staff will draft tentative agendas for the next 3 meetings and get it out electronically for feedback and suggestions. As it is difficult to project how far we'll progress at any meeting, these will be sketches of next steps and when something actually is completed may vary from our planned schedule. But if we agree conceptually how we want to proceed, that will be a big help for everyone. If you have thoughts about next steps, feel free to send them to us as we build the tentative agendas. Also, suggestions for who might be helpful to invite to talk with the commission.

Agenda Items for March 23:
>   Group Norms
>   Policy Discussion – building on 2/9 discussion

DOE Staff follow-up
Timeline: Plan of action/ structured agenda/regular updates to the SBE/ SBE planning meeting in mid-late August/September-October to give board time to consider/ Early December to meet legislative timelines

Electronic agendas for next 3 meetings

Public meeting determination - talk to Mark Oettinger